



Tobacco Tid-bits

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Southwest Washington Health District

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Tobacco Budget Passed

Washington will receive \$15 million in the biennium for tobacco prevention. This is less than the \$26 million the Governor had requested for the statewide tobacco prevention plan. The Department of Health is currently modifying the plan for the reduced funding level— and then it will determine the allocation of funds among the various Health Districts. *Kay Koontz, Executive Director of the SWWHD*, says “the allocation that will come to Clark and Skamania Counties will significantly increase our efforts at preventing tobacco use by kids and adults.”

Welcome Tom Melville

Tom Melville came on board as the Health District's new Tobacco Prevention and Control Coordinator in April. He joins the rest of the tobacco prevention team as a dedicated staff coordinator for many efforts—including implementation of the tobacco prevention plan. Tom brings with him lots of ideas and experience. He has a Master's Degree in Teaching Health Education and he has taught grade school through high school. Tom has also worked as an ATOD (alcohol, tobacco and other drug) counselor for the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Prior to his current position with the District, he worked for Marion County Health Department in Oregon managing their Tobacco Prevention Program.

Getting Started

Now that the tobacco prevention program has a coordinator and a budget - things are really beginning to move along. According to Tom Melville the new logo (above) “will be on EVERYTHING we design.” A graphics house is working on a smokefree decal to be displayed at all smokefree businesses in Clark and Skamania Counties. A recent telephone survey determined that exactly 50% of businesses in the two counties are smokefree. In June a smokefree restaurant brochure should be ready to distribute. The District is also working on a “Smokefree Times” publication giving local restaurants statistics and good reasons why they should clear smoke from their air.

Smoker's Alley

Employees and patients at the Southwest Washington Medical Center are catching heat from neighbors who don't want secondhand smoke in their neighborhood. The entire campus went smokefree last August— but die-hard smokers have claimed what neighbors refer to as “smokers alley”— along NE 92nd and the edge of the hospital's property. Neighbors say as many as 20 people gather there at one time. According to *Ken Cole— a spokesperson for the hospital—* they will not build a designated smoking area because it would “encourage people to do something that hurts their health— and that sends the wrong message.” The hospital has asked their employees to go to the west side of the campus where there are more businesses and less residents.

Tobacco Sting

If kids can't get cigarettes they can't smoke—and that is why merchant compliance checks are so important. According to the *American Journal of Public Health—* there are 4.9 million packs of cigarettes illegally sold to minors each year in Washington. Earlier this month, local teens put Clark County stores to the test. Teen volunteers were briefed by health officials and then they attempted to buy cigarettes from 25 different stores. Only two clerks sold to minors during the sting. *Columbia River High School sophomore, Kyle Potter*, says “more and more kids are smoking across from our school.” But the sting revealed that fewer youth are getting their cigarettes from local retailers— who showed a 92% compliance rate (compared to 86% compliance last year). *James Lanz, SWWHD Public Health Nurse, Health Promotion Unit*, coordinated the effort. He says he is very pleased with the results— “Clark County retailers and their employees are doing an excellent job trying to prevent minors from purchasing tobacco.” Information on the two stores that did sell to minors was forwarded to the State Liquor Board— and the stores will likely be cited. The 23 stores that followed the law will receive a letter of congratulations and a certificate of appreciation.

Fighting Tobacco With Art

Several local students took a hard look at tobacco advertisements— then created their own counteractive messages through art. Over 200 4th through 12th grade students entered the Tobacco Free Youth Art Contest sponsored by *Community Choices 2010*. Many pieces are proudly displayed at Fort Vancouver High School— where the winners were honored with a celebration. *Erik Vidstrand— otherwise known as the “Barf Man”—* was the special guest speaker at the event. He handed out “barf-bags” and showed off the “Barf-boro” bus. The Barf-boro theme is designed to mock Marlboro cigarettes— and highlight the unglamorous side of smoking.

Baker County Passes Ordinance

Smokers can forget lighting up in another Oregon County. On May 16th Baker County voters passed a smokefree ordinance by 55%. According to *Skye Flanagan, Baker City Tobacco Prevention Coordinator*, the ordinance will ban smoking from all businesses, restaurants and enclosed public places. The smoking ban does not include bars or hotel/motel rooms.

Laughing Gas May Kick Habit

Smokers may have a new way to lick their addiction— going to the dentist. A study released by the *American Psychiatric Association* reveals that nitrous oxide cuts back on cravings. Seven smokers went through a single session of breathing the gas and five quit for at least three days. Four were still tobacco free when they checked back a month later. *AP*

Note From the Editor:

This newsletter is intended to help keep you informed about tobacco happenings in our circle and worldwide. If you have any tid-bits you would like to share through this monthly publication, please send them to me at the e-mail address listed above. I am a journalist who is passionate about informing people of tobacco issues— and contributing to efforts to prevent tobacco use. I am excited about this mechanism of communication and hope you will feel free to contribute. *Kimberly Nelson, Tobacco Tid-bits Editor.*